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the various facets of Dürer's personality as an artist, as well as the collections and the reception history in a fresh and engaging manner for their respective readerships. The inventory of the Uffizi, moreover, offers an immense

treasure of primary and secondary information that is still waiting to be tapped by researchers and experts alike.

Translated by Karen Christenson

Prints and Drawings in Eighteenth-century France

Michael Matile

Quand la gravure fait illusion. Autour de Watteau et Boucher: le dessin gravé au XVIII^e siècle, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes, 11 November 2006–26 February 2007, Montreuil, Editions Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2006, 160 pp., 102 col. ills., €29.

There is scarcely any other artistic medium which, by dint of its vulnerability, is so clearly an object destined for exclusive enjoyment as is the drawing. The act of keeping drawings protected from light, in folders and cabinets, ran counter to the wish of eighteenth-century connoisseurs who wanted to be able to offer suitable reproductions to a wider circle of amateurs and artists. Printmaking proved to be the technique *par excellence* for this purpose, as well as an important prerequisite for research on drawings that could then be opened up to a wider audience. The close indebtedness of prints to the original inspired engravers and publishers to combine their didactic ambitions with the greatest possible perfection of artistry and craftsmanship. There was scarcely any expense at which they balked in their attempt to overcome the difficulties related to printing techniques, in order to succeed in aesthetic terms. The presentation of *recueils* as 'cabinets' of drawings with mounts was intended to communicate the aura of the physical object.

There were essentially three different approaches to the reproduction of drawings: works devoted to individual collections (be they princely or private), monographic *recueils* dedicated to the work of one artist, or collections of facsimiles of drawings by Old Masters. These last, accompanied by a text, aimed to present a history of the genre. The printed medium could thus perform a bridging function, which in turn opened up new paths for comparative art-historical writing and helped to facilitate the mutual elucidation of text and image in the art book. General support for these developments can be observed during the second half of the eighteenth century, proving that the successful results demonstrated by these new possibilities in the publication of *recueils* could then be extended to contemporary drawings, and above all to pedagogical questions relating to the teaching of drawing as a whole.

In the exhibition series *Feuille à feuille: Estampes et images*

imprimées dans les collections des musées du Nord – Pas-de-Calais, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes has now published a catalogue on the art of the 'fac-simile' of drawings in France. From the outset the editors, Emmanuelle Delapierre and Sophie Raux, restricted the theme of the exhibition to French eighteenth-century works. Preceding various essays is a short text by Dominique Morelon on a less well-known collection of prints, the one assembled by Jacques Doucet that was given to the Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie at the University of Paris and since 2003 has been incorporated in the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art. Thereupon follow two chapters on the most important early *recueils* including reproductions of drawings, the *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux dessins qui sont en France* published in 1729 and known by the name of its author, Pierre Crozat (by Cordélia Hattori), and Jean de Jullienne's monographic *Figures de différents caractères*, published in two volumes, in 1726 and 1728 respectively, with prints after drawings by Antoine Watteau (by Isabelle Tillerot).

However, neither the etching technique that was adopted by Jullienne's engravers, nor the tonally graduated *chiaroscuro* cuts obtained by the use of different plates, seen in the *Recueil Crozat*, did justice to the art of drawing as practised at the time and to the predilection for various polychrome crayon effects. It was not until Gilles Demarteau perfected the *manière de crayon*, which was first used as such towards the end of the 1750s, that a convincing printed equivalent for the reproduction of crayon drawings was found. In discussing this, Raux mentions earlier attempts to achieve the breakthrough that would permit reproduction of linear drawing styles in a printed form, such as Domenico [*sic*] Campagnola's stipple engravings (p. 58; it is obviously Giulio who is meant), or the developments that occurred in England in the 1730s in the work of Arthur Pond. The attempts to achieve the most faithful possible reproduction of drawing techniques had provided sufficient incentive for others to continue their research in various directions. The results were then to be seen in Louis-Marin Bonnet's *manière de pastel*, in the various types of etching or aquatint in *manière de lavis et l'aquatinte* and in the technique of soft-ground etch-

ing, which convinced Jean-Charles François that one could engrave with it as easily and as quickly as one could draw.

While Diderot, in a piece written in 1765, attests to the very great importance of these developments in terms of the refinement and perfecting of printing techniques, they did not meet with the same benevolence under the pen of Charles-Nicholas Cochin. He initially saw the benefits that the new techniques offered in terms of the teaching of drawing. Bonnet was to publish successfully, under the title of *Principes de dessin*, more than 30 different examples intended to give instruction in drawing. Cochin, however, was not prepared to concede that the new techniques possessed anything other than 'usefulness'. He was to be proved wrong, given both the success and the widespread approval that the new techniques enjoyed. More and more members of the Academy lent their voices to the cause, praising the new possibilities of the art of printmaking. Many of them, above all François Boucher, handed over their drawings to engravers so that copies could be made. Eventually these same arguments convinced the private connoisseurs and collectors; they then opened the doors of their drawing cabinets to engravers. Once more it was Demarteau, himself a member of the Academy, who was to prove particularly successful in this domain. Almost half of his engraved work is devoted to reproductions of drawings by Boucher. A further third of his production is composed of sheets showing drawings from 22 different collections, including those of Mariette, Jullienne and Dézallier d'Argenville.

Raux deserves credit for having analysed these and other aspects not only of the reception and dissemination of these new techniques, but also of the strategies used for their commercialization. She examines these questions in three sections that are valuable by reason of their conciseness and clarity. Placed between these is a chapter by Charlotte Guichard on drawing instruction for artists and dilettantes, which shows how much success the printed, didactically organized Drawing Schools enjoyed among their intended public. The catalogue closes on a series of brief biographies of the engravers, a small glossary of printmaking terms and a short bibliography.

As was the case with earlier publications in this series – a number of which also deal with the question of printmaking as an intermediary between the unique art work and the public – this catalogue focusses our attention on the collection of the Valenciennes Museum and thus on a regional,

less well-known print collection. Complementary material comes in the form of important sheets from the large collections of the Fondation Frits Lugt, the Collection Rothschild from the Musée du Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale and several others. It is probably because of this wish to draw attention to lesser known print collections that the introductory text on Jacques Doucet's collection is to be found here. Yet the addition of this essay seems less coherent given the general concept of the publication, which concentrates exclusively – with the exception of a few examples that almost seem to be included as footnotes – on French prints. The virtues of this restricted subject none the less present a serious disadvantage for the reader. Recently an article appeared on the question of the reproduction of drawings whose title seems pertinent: 'For a Connoisseurship without Frontiers: The New Function of Old Master Drawings and the Fac-simile in Eighteenth-century England' (Pascal Griener, in Pascal Griener and Kornelia Imesch, *Klassizismen und Kosmopolitismus: Programm oder Problem? Austausch in Kunst und Kunsttheorie im 18. Jahrhundert*, Zürich 2004, pp. 179–92). The attempts to translate drawings into prints were encouraged by an international group of people bound together very closely by shared interests, to an extent almost unequalled in the field of printmaking. From Stockholm to Palermo, from London to Venice, amateurs and collectors cultivated strong relationships. Information about individual *recueils* and about new technical achievements was thus transmitted rapidly. Anyone who has seen the extensive documentation published by the Leipzig art dealer Rudolph Weigel as early as 1865 – a reference to which is unfortunately not to be found in the catalogue's summary bibliography – cannot help but be impressed by the circle of those who participated in this exchange (Rudolph Weigel, *Die Werke der Maler in ihren Handzeichnungen: Beschreibendes Verzeichniss der in Kupfer gestochenen, lithographirten und photographirten Facsimiles von Originalzeichnungen grosser Meister*, Leipzig 1865). The insistent focus on France does not pay full justice to these interdependent relationships, based on mutual interest, between engravers and their audience throughout Europe. A broader introduction dealing with the question of drawing facsimiles in their European context would, with hindsight, have been helpful to readers who would certainly be grateful for it.

Translated by Cecilia Hurley

